

Improvement Act of 2000. This legislation will make important improvements in the railroad retirement program.

The introduction of this legislation by the bipartisan leadership of the two House committees with jurisdiction over this program represents a significant step toward enactment. We are pleased that Congress continues to have the close working relationship with railroad management and labor groups that has allowed us to come together on this bill today.

This reform legislation makes several improvements in the current benefit structure, especially for widows and widowers. In addition, the legislation modernizes the system's investment practices and strengthens the financing of the program.

This legislation is the product of several years of complex negotiations between rail management and rail labor. These negotiations were also given impetus by the September 1998 hearing held by the Subcommittee on Ground Transportation on benefit reform legislation authored by our colleague JACK QUINN. Although not all representatives of rail labor could support the final compromise signed in January of this year, a significant majority have endorsed the agreement, as have the groups representing rail retirees. We hope that as this bill moves through the legislative process, the full value of the benefits it brings to the system will be carefully assessed, and that it will ultimately receive the support of all groups.

The Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2000 is the end product of a bipartisan collaborative process. It is a bill that each of us supports and is committed to bring to enactment during the remaining days of the 106th Congress. We are pleased to introduce it today.

RECOGNIZING STEPHEN WEISS, JR.

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 13, 2000

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Stephen Weiss, Jr., a man who has been very instrumental in assisting hundreds of Brooklyn residents in the transition from apartment renters to first time homeowners.

Mr. Weiss, a graduate of Yale University, is an executive with Flintlock Construction Services, LLC, as well as with several other property development companies. Mr. Weiss is also actively involved in the operations of a property management company. Mr. Weiss joined these various firms in 1980, with the goal of using his positions with them to develop and construct primarily affordable housing, both for rental and for sale. Mr. Weiss also used these enterprises to develop much-needed medical centers, to further benefit the community.

With his partner, DeCosta Headley, Mr. Weiss has developed and built hundreds of affordable apartments in East New York, Brownsville and Bedford Stuyvesant. Many of these homes, built to house working people, were rebuilt out of abandoned shells that used to blight these neighborhoods.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and all of my colleagues to join me in recognizing the lifelong efforts of Stephen Weiss, Jr., and wish him continued success in his future endeavors.

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER DOUG FEARS, USCG

HON. SONNY CALLAHAN

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 13, 2000

Mr. CALLAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Lieutenant Commander Doug Fears, who recently left his position as the United States Coast Guard's (USCG) House liaison officer to attend the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island.

Lieutenant Commander Doug Fears grew up on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. He enlisted in the USCG in 1982 and served on the Cutter *Taney* (WHEC 37) home ported in Portsmouth, Virginia, and in the pre-commissioning detail for the Cutter *Tampa* (WMEC 902) in Norfolk, Virginia. He attended the USCG's Electronics Technician "A" school on Governor's Island, New York, and the Navy's Broadened Opportunity for Officer Selection and Training (BOOST) Program in San Diego, California, before accepting an appointment to the USCG Academy in 1985.

While at the academy, Lieutenant Commander Fears was active in a number of programs and served as the regimental commander of the Corps of Cadets. He graduated from the academy in May 1989 and subsequently served as Operations Officer and Navigator on the Cutter *Basswood* (WLB 388) in Guam, Marianas Islands.

He was then selected for the USCG/Navy officer exchange program in 1991. He served on the Aegis cruiser, U.S.S. *Vincennes* (CG49), as the Aegis Fire Control Officer. He subsequently served on the Throat Upgrade cruiser U.S.S. *Leahy* (CG 16) as the Combat Information Center Officer. Both ships were home ported in San Diego, California. During his tours, he deployed in support of Operations Desert Storm/Southern Watch in the Northern Arabian (Persian) Gulf, Restore Hope in the Indian Ocean off Somalia, Blue Line in the Eastern Pacific off South America and various bi-lateral exercises in the Sea of Japan and South China Sea.

In July 1993, Lieutenant Commander Fears reported to Seattle, Washington, as a search and rescue controller and command duty officer in the Thirteenth District Command Center. From 1994 to 1996, he served as aide and executive assistant to the Thirteenth District Commander, Rear Admiral John Lockwood.

In June 1996, Lieutenant Commander Fears assumed command of the Cutter *Sitkinak* (WP 1329), home ported in Key West, Florida. During his tour, he was involved in numerous counter-narcotics, alien migrant interdiction and search and rescue operations, including Operations Able Response and Frontier Shield. He is a designated Coast Guard Cutterman and Navy Surface Warfare Officer, a licensed Master (100 gross tons) and has been awarded over two dozen personal unit, campaign and service awards. He is the 1997 national recipient of the U.S. Navy League's Captain David H. Jarvis Award for inspirational leadership.

From June 1998 to June 2000, Lieutenant Commander Fears was assigned to the United States House of Representatives as the as-

sistant USCG liaison. In this capacity, he unselfishly served me, other members and their staffs in fulfilling requests and providing vital information pertinent to the USCG. My staff worked with Lieutenant Commander Fears closely over the past two years, and I know for a fact they could not have done their job properly without the able-bodied assistance of this fine officer. When a problem or issue pertinent to the USCG surfaced in my office, Lieutenant Commander Fears was the first one my staff or I called and, like clockwork, he promptly and thoroughly addressed the matter at hand.

In August 2000, he reports to the Naval War College, College of Command and Staff, in Newport, Rhode Island, where I know he will find great success. Lieutenant Commander Fears' future is bright, Mr. Speaker, and I wish him and his wife, Kate, the best as they forge ahead.

HONORING RICHMOND COUNTY SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL BETA CLUB QUIZ BOWL TEAM

HON. ROBIN HAYES

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 13, 2000

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the accomplishments of the Richmond County Senior High School Beta Club Quiz Bowl Team. Competing in the 20th Annual National Beta Club Convention in mid-June, team captain Joey Moree, John Bream, Allen Hodges, William Morgan, and alternate Mary Catherine Knight placed second in the nation and nearly came home to North Carolina with the National Championship. The Richmond Senior High team was one of 18 teams from southeastern and midwestern states. Some 2,500 Betas participated in the 3 day tournament in Arlington, Texas.

Having placed second in the North Carolina State Beta Quiz Bowl with the help of team member Montgomery Morris, the quiz bowl team earned the right to attend the national convention. The other five team members traveled to Arlington accompanied by advisors Judy Harrelson and Robert Graves. The Richmond team cruised through the first three rounds of the tournament. In the first round, Richmond Senior High defeated Martin County, Florida 185 to 95. The students breezed to a 250 to 140 victory over Koshkonong, Missouri in the second round. However, the semifinals proved to be more challenging. After trailing Pendleton Heights, Indiana 80 to 75 at halftime, the team roared to life and dominated the second half, winning with a resounding 265 to 105 tally. Drawing a crowd of over 2,000 Betas, the final round was a close contest throughout the match. Battling Southside, South Carolina, the finals came down to the very last question, with Southside pulling ahead of Richmond Senior High with a single bonus to win the championship 155 to 150.

Mr. Speaker, the accomplishments of the Richmond Senior High School Beta Club Quiz Bowl Team deserve recognition. The hard work and dedication of Mr. Moree, Mr. Bream, Mr. Hodges, Mr. Morgan, Ms. Knight, and Mr. Morris have made their peers, teachers and